

Kansas City InfoZine

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Missouri First in the Nation Life-saving Measure for Heart Attack and Stroke Patients

Gov. Matt Blunt signed legislation that strengthens efforts to protect Missourians' from the fatal effects of strokes and heart attacks.

Jefferson City, MO - infoZine - "Heart disease and stroke are some of the leading causes of death in Missouri and this legislation will help ensure that heart attack and stroke patients in our state receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time," Gov. Blunt said. "We must continue to work together to create a new and better health care system for our state."

House Bill 1790, sponsored by Rep. Robert Wayne Cooper, creates a "Time Critical Diagnosis System" for stroke and ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), a particularly fatal type of heart attack. Missouri is the first state in the nation to enact legislation governing a STEMI and stroke statewide system of care.

Research shows patients transported to designated stroke centers and STEMI centers, rather than simply the nearest hospital, have higher survival rates. Missouri currently has designated trauma centers, which care for the most severely injured patients in emergencies. The legislation expands the emergency system by developing guidelines for designating stroke and STEMI centers.

Heart disease and stroke made up one-third of all Missouri deaths in 2006.

The health department has already been preparing the state to implement a system of stroke and STEMI centers. A Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force that was formed by the department in November has been meeting to discuss how to build the new system. The task force included more than 100 members of the emergency medicine community.